

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 17 are independent claims.

By this amendment, claims 1 and 17 are amended and claim 20 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer thereto.

Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication on page 13 of the Office Action that claim 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Bearing in mind the comments in Official Action regarding the allowability of dependent claim 20, please note that the present application is amended so as to place it into condition for allowance by rewriting the claims accordingly. An early indication of the same would be greatly appreciated.

The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

(1) claims 1-4 and 17 (see body of rejection) are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No. 5,315,377 to Isono et al. (hereafter Isono) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,219 to Yamashita et al. (hereafter Yamashita); and

(2) claims 5-16, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Isono in view of Yamashita

and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,765,568 to Swift et al. (hereafter Swift).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully point out that the present application is amended so as to place it into condition for allowance.

Specifically, independent claims 1 and 17 are amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 20. As such, each of claims 1-19 now stands allowable over the cited art.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion


In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Carolyn T. Baumgardner (Reg. No. 41,345) at (703) 205-8000 to schedule a Personal Interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment from or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. §1.17; particularly, the extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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